

# The Octopus

Some people think of the octopus as a giant creature. They have seen this in science fiction movies. They think the octopus is a mean creature who attacks people and other animals. The octopus is really a shy animal. It is usually quite small.

The octopus has eight arms. Its name tells us this because “octo” means eight. The octopus uses its arms to walk on the ocean floor. Its arms are also used to capture crabs. Crabs are its favorite food. The octopus bites into the crab with its strong beak. This sends poison into the crab’s body.

The octopus protects itself in three ways. First, when frightened, the octopus can push water from its body in a powerful stream. This action pushes the octopus forward very rapidly. This allows it to escape.

Second, the body of the octopus has a special sac or pouch that holds a dark, ink-like fluid. When an enemy comes close, the octopus squirts some of this fluid. It then swims away. All that the predator sees is a dark cloud in the water where the octopus was. Meanwhile, the octopus has escaped.

Finally, the octopus’s body changes color when the octopus is excited or frightened. Suppose an octopus sees a crab. Patches of pink, purple, or blue will appear on the octopus’s skin. Suppose the octopus sees an enemy. The octopus will completely change color. Then it seems to disappear into the background of its hiding place. It is hard for the predator to find the octopus.